

Sullivan County out \$4,000 a day

◆ **Patients not referred to nursing home:**
10 patients have left since county ended Genesis HealthCare contract.

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NEWPORT — Sullivan County has lost roughly \$4,000 per day in revenue since county officials ousted nursing home consulting firm Genesis HealthCare last month, county Manager Ed Gil de Rubio said.

Local hospitals have stopped referring acute-care patients to the county nursing home in Unity, Gil de Rubio said, and 10 patients have left the facility since the county terminated its contract with Genesis, which had provided administrative and nursing services since 2005.

"I don't know how long this is

going to last; it's hard to pinpoint that, but it's a significant hit on the revenue," Gil de Rubio said. "I think the medical community, especially with skilled care, they're waiting to see what happens." Political dissension surrounding the Genesis contract led to the county commission's decision to sever ties with the company last month.

Medicaid patients at the nursing home generate about \$150 per patient per day for the county, while skilled care patients with private insurance or Medicare generate three times that amount per day. "That's where we make our money," Gil de Rubio said.

The county recently selected Landmark Health Solutions of Haverhill, Mass., to replace Genesis, starting on Monday. The company has agreed to provide consulting services, a nursing home administrator, a director of nursing and two lead nurses for about \$322,000 over a six-month period. Genesis has asked for \$450,000 for the year.

The county meanwhile is searching for its own permanent nursing home administrator.

Gil de Rubio, who had opposed the recent administrative switch, said he hopes that once Landmark comes on board, hospitals will again start referring patients.

To make up for losses in the interim, "We're going to have to see what the toll is, how long it's going to take us to rebound, and how we can cut back on expenses

as the year progresses," he said.

The county will host a forum for nursing home patients and their families to explain the administration change at 7:30 p.m. Monday, July 9, at the nursing home.

Meanwhile, the county delegation has put off setting the county's operating budget for next year while the delegation's finance committee continues to look for places to make cuts.

The budget proposed by the Sullivan County Commission would increase the amount raised through taxes by 14.1 percent, or \$1,311,150, over the 2007 budget amount. Gil de Rubio said the budget increase this year is primarily due to the rising cost of health insurance and salaries.

The county delegation plans to reconvene July 13 to continue budget talks.